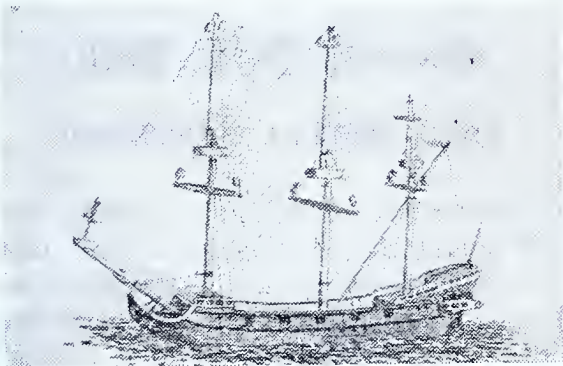


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Pennsylvania Historical
Commission.
Governor Printz Park,
Tinticum Township, Delaware County



Governor Printz Park

Tinticum Township, Delaware County

John Morton Homestead

Prospect Park, Delaware County

MEMORIALS OF THE SWEDISH CONTRIBUTION TO PENNSYLVANIA

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Gouverneur Printz Park

John Morton Homestead

GOVERNOR PRINTZ PARK, near present-day Essington, a few miles south of Philadelphia, marks the site of the first permanent settlement of white men within the present boundaries of Pennsylvania. Here, on what was once Tinicum Island, the Swedes under the leadership of Johan Printz established the capital of New Sweden in 1643. Not far distant, in the borough of Prospect Park, stands John Morton Homestead, the birthplace of John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. John Morton was a descendant of a colonist of New Sweden, and it is, therefore, appropriate that the Homestead should be used as center of administration for Printz Park. Both historic shrines are properties of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

The Founding of New Sweden

Although much of Sweden's energy was absorbed by her activity on the Protestant side in the Thirty Years' War, she was not without ambitions for overseas colonial expansion, inspired by the same spirit of commercial enterprise which had led to the foundation of English, French, and Dutch colonies in the western world. Her interest found expression early in 1637, in the New Sweden Company, organized by Swedish and Dutch capitalists and chartered by the Swedish government. After careful prep-

and when crops failed in 1652, the very existence of the colony was threatened. In 1653, Printz returned to Stockholm to seek aid, but to little avail. The relief expedition of 1654, under Johan Rising, was not strong enough to prevent the loss of the colony. In 1655, it was seized by the energetic Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Netherlands, and the Delaware river region remained under Dutch control until the English seized the Dutch possessions in 1664.

The Swedish prologue to Pennsylvania history is of great interest, even if the actual development of Pennsylvania was to be determined by William Penn and his Quaker brethren. Just as New England dates its beginning from the Pilgrim Separatists of Plymouth, though that tiny colony was later engulfed by the Puritan migration, so Pennsylvania's beginnings go back to Tinicum Island and the colony of New Sweden. Here began the development of agriculture, industry, and commerce in Pennsylvania.

John Morton

A log house in the present-day borough of Prospect Park was the birthplace of John Morton, a famous descendant of the colonists of New Sweden. The first section of the house was built by his great-grandfather Morten Mortenson in 1654, shortly after his arrival from Sweden with the expedition of Johan Rising. About 1698, a second log house was built, and the two log structures were connected by a central stone section in 1806.

John Morton was born in 1724 or 1725, the son of John Morton and Mary Archer.

His father died before his birth, and his mother married a second time. His step-father John Sketchley, an English surveyor, was a man of some culture, and gave him a good education, teaching him surveying. His work as a young man included the survey of some tracts on Tinicum Island. In 1754 he married Ann Justice, by whom he had three sons and five daughters.

In 1756 John Morton began his public career as a member of the Provincial Assembly from Chester County. With a three-year gap he served in the Assembly until 1776, while he was high sheriff of the county, and was its Speaker in 1775 and 1776. He also held various judicial offices being successively justice of the peace, president judge of the county court, and associate judge of the supreme court of the province. His most noted service, however, was as delegate from Pennsylvania to the various congresses of the colonies. He was a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress in 1765, and to the various Continental Congresses from 1774 to 1777, the year of his death. In July of 1776, his vote with those of Benjamin Franklin and James Wilson swung Pennsylvania to the side of independence by a majority of one. John Morton, signer of the Declaration of Independence, is a noble example of the contribution of New Sweden and the Swedish people to the history of Pennsylvania and the United States.

Governor Printz Park

In 1938 Pennsylvania celebrated the 300th anniversary of the beginnings of white civilization on its soil. The acquisition and beautification of a park on the site of the

Printzhof, the capitol-residence of Governor Printz, was one feature of this commemoration. The Assembly by Act No. 318, approved May 28, 1937, had authorized the Department of Property and Supplies to acquire this property by gift of the Swedish-Colonial Society, and had vested its administration in the Historical Commission. The park includes about 7.224 acres, and is located in Tinicum Township, Delaware County.

The Commission undertook a thorough archaeological investigation of the site. Thousands of relics of the Swedish era were uncovered, and the foundations of the original Printzhof were brought to light. Next, the development of the park itself was undertaken, on what had been for years little more than a town dumping ground. A sea wall was erected to protect the property from river erosion. Grading, landscaping, and tree-planting made a remarkable transformation, and by the time it was formally dedicated by Prince Bertil of Sweden, on June 29, 1939, an attractive park had been created.

John Morton Homestead

Provision for a suitable memorial to John Morton had long been desired by the people of Delaware County. The first consequence of this was the Act of Assembly, approved May 4, 1927, which authorized the Department of Property and Supplies to erect a monument to the memory of John Morton in the city of Chester, and appropriated \$10,000 for this purpose, contingent upon the raising of the same amount by the citizens of Chester. In 1935 this Act was amended, by Act approved June 11, pro-

and Swedish colonists purchasing all Dutch rights. It was decided to re-invigorate the colony, and to accomplish this purpose, John Printz was selected as Governor of New Sweden.

One of the most interesting characters in American colonial history, Printz had served with distinction in the armies of Sweden for fifteen years. He received his new appointment in July 1642, and was knighted. August 15, his Instructions as Governor were signed and preparations for a new colonizing expedition put under way. Many of these newest immigrants were Finns, for Finland was then under Swedish rule, and all were of sturdy stock. From Gothenburg in November 1642, they departed in the *Fama* and the *Swan*. They arrived in March 1643.

The doughty Governor soon changed the center of Swedish power on the Delaware. By August 1643, there had been completed on Tinicum Island, Fort New Gothenburg, "made of hemlock beams, laid one upon the other" and armed with "four small copper cannon." Printz likewise erected there a combined residence and government building, which became the first and only capital established by the Swedish government in the New World. This capital and capitol building were upon the soil of the present Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and became thereby the seat of the first civilized government in Pennsylvania.

Governor Printz vigorously promoted both agriculture and trade with the Indians, and at first the colony was reasonably prosperous. But the competition of the Dutch traders from New Amsterdam was keen,

aration, equipping and supplying the expedition, and enlisting colonists, the vessels *Kalmar Nyckel* and *Fogel Grip* set sail from Gothenburg, Sweden, late in November 1637, bound for the New World.

April 8, 1638, these pioneer settlers landed at the site of present-day Wilmington, Delaware. The commander Peter Minuit, who had earlier purchased Manhattan Island from the Indians for the Dutch at a price of twenty-four dollars, now opened negotiations with Indian chiefs for the purchase of land along the Delaware River. In exchange for some merchandise, he purchased land extending from Wilmington on the south to the present-day League Island Navy Yard on the North, with the Delaware River as the eastern boundary, and with the western limit designated as "where the sun set." In May 1638, Fort Christina was built on a cape about two miles from the original landing, and when the maintenance and safety of the little colony was provided for, Minuit left for a cruise in the West Indies, where his ship was lost in a hurricane.

In May 1640 and October 1641, more ships arrived, bringing new settlers, supplies, additional soldiers, domestic animals, and a minister of the gospel. By 1641, the settlement numbered some twenty families, about sixty persons. Trading and farming were the chief occupations, small gardens and farms having been established by this date.

Johan Printz and Tinicum

After the expedition of 1640, the New Sweden Company was brought entirely under Swedish control, the royal government

viding that the Department of Forests and Waters should acquire and restore. John Morton's birthplace, with the approval of the Historical Commission. The State appropriation was changed to \$7,500, and the contingent contribution by citizens of Delaware County was to be \$5,000. The State acquired the property by deed dated May 28, 1937, paying \$3,450 to the John Morton Association, a private corporation which had been formed to preserve the property. The Association used the money it received to pay the mortgage remaining from its purchase of the land for \$8,000. The tract covered about 2.4 acres.

The John Morton Homestead was restored, some recent houses and boat houses were razed, and a caretaker's house was built. Landscaping and tree planting beautified the grounds. In 1939 the Assembly, by Act approved June 26, transferred the administration of the Homestead to the Historical Commission, which took it over officially on September 1.

John Morton Homestead and Governor Printz Park, associated in matters of physical administration, are also linked by closer ties. Both bear witness to the contribution of the Swedish people to the liberty and progress of the State and Nation.

